

Wappingers Falls EDC Committee
6/27/2013

Member Attendance: Kathy Rutledge, Rob Alfonso, Kevin Huber, Scott Davis, Sandra Vacchio, Cindy Latino, Ronnie Komornick, Alex Reese, Kristin Catalano, Matt Alexander, Don McCormick

Absent: Peg O’Leary, Don Swartz, Mike Kocan, Denise Calabrese

Public Attendance: Mary Schmalz, Beth Devine, Lea Bishop, Claudia Sweeney, Barb DiZillo, Jack Fedigan, Robert Fedigan, Paul Latino, Brian Kelly (Sen Gipson’s Office), Beverly Franklin

Meeting called to order at 7:20 PM:

Minutes of 5/30/13

Approved

Agenda:

Item: WFBPA Update

Kathy Rutledge made a brief report. The Association is partnering with the Village on soliciting funds for the summer arts program. A letter will be sent out to a select group of businesses asking for donations to cover the funding gap between budget and actual cost of art program.

Item: Presentation by Robert Fedigan on the Bleachery

Robert Fedigan addressed the WFEDC regarding the cleanup at the Bleachery Site. While it is good news to see the cleanup finally moving forward, Robert raised the concern that the work will be to commercial standards and not residential. Additional infrastructure work will be needed for development, particularly the water pressure issue. In addition, the current cleanup bid does not include removal of the buildings from the site. Bob continued with questions regarding the Village’s ability to attract developers to invest in the redevelopment of the property and the return on investment. Matt Alexander stated that there were already 5 developers with potential interest. Matt continued with explaining that the concept for redevelopment of the area was based on the Waterfront Revitalization Plan. Public opinion obtained indicated a desire for more residential development.

Discussion continued on the highest return and best use of the property. Robert spoke of the impact of the additional bridge access in their development of the property that Market St. Industries owns. Robert stated that the zoning use at the time of the initial designation for cleanup impacted the level of cleanup to a commercial grade. He presented documents that addressed this. In concluding his remarks, Robert expressed a concern that the current adjacent property owners were “left out of the loop” in discussions about potential future development of the area. Ronnie Komornick thanked the Fedigans on behalf of the Village for their commitment to restoring the former Bleachery property. Efforts will be made to keep them abreast of developments concerning the cleanup and redevelopment of the property.

Item: WEDC (Women's Economic Development Council)

Lea Bishop of the WEDC presented information about the satellite center now operating out of Marist College. The WEDC is not for women only. It is a resource center for small business owners and future entrepreneurs to provide basic business training on topics from management, marketing, social networking, etc.. Programs are low cost or free. Micro loans for business purposes can be accessed from SBA through the center. It is targeted at the 7 counties of the Mid-Hudson Valley. Kristin Catalano suggested that the WFEDC partner with the WEDC with a link from our new webpage. Beverly Franklin, owner of "Measure to Fit", spoke of her recent participation in the WEDC business course and the tremendous knowledge she gained in participating..

Item: Website

Nicole Bragg has been working on the link for the EDC from the Village website. The page is up and running. Information to be included is our mission statement, general information about the WFEDC, map of the area, "Welcome" from the Mayor, DVD created to market the Village and updates on the new Elan zoning plan.

Item: New Business

- A.) Paul Latino addressed the committee with a suggestion that we seriously consider hiring a marketing person to book events in Mesier Park. It is a natural asset to the Village which is currently underutilized. Drawing more people into the Village with quality events would certainly be a boost for local businesses and make the Village a more attractive place for new businesses to establish. He emphasized that relying on volunteers was not a dependable solution to making event planning successful. He highlighted the success of the Village of Saugerties. Scott Davis remarked that while the idea is great, the Village lacks current funding for such a position. Scott suggested to the Mayor that perhaps we could apply for a Marist intern in the Fall to jumpstart a marketing program. Matt will follow up with this.
- B.) Although planning continues on lighting the gorge, the project completion is still quite a ways off. Regardless of the status, the August 30th concert being sponsored by the WFBPA will be moved to Mill Street to host a "Block Party". Cindy will make contact with the band to move the location. A letter will be sent to the Village regarding this event.
- C.) Mayor Alexander presented a draft of a plan created by intern Rachelle Abram for a tax incentive in the Village (Plan 485-B). The plan would offer a business investment exemption to developers. The committee will review and make recommendations at our next meeting.
- D.) **Mission Statement:** The committee reviewed the mission statement written by Kristen Catalano. After brief discussion regarding possible changes, the committee voted to keep the statement as written;

Mission Statement

The mission of the Wappingers Falls Economic Development Committee is to attract, retain and cultivate business within the Village of Wappingers Falls. The committee's purpose is to facilitate an organized relationship between prospective and existing businesses and those who govern, all the while promoting employment, ease of planning and local economy to better the quality of life for the Village and its citizens. We strive for a thriving business friendly environment, however preserving the cultural diversity and historical amenities we have become renowned for. Our goal is to respect the past but embrace the future.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM

Next Meeting: July 25, 2013 @ 7:15 PM - Legion Hall

Respectfully submitted:

Cindy Latino